

Just Guys Being Dudes by Luddleston

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Summary:

There are certain things that totally normal, totally heterosexual best friends do. Like cuddling. And somewhat intimate photoshoots. And occasional kissing—listen, the kissing was *one time*, and that's only weird if you make it weird, okay?

Or, Noctis has a thing for Prompto and everybody knows this except for Noctis.

Just Guys Being Dudes

Author's Note:

I can pretty much guarantee this has already been done before in this fandom but I love this trope too much so here's my take!

Also, if you're wondering "ok seriously who could be this dumb because this is so obviously gay" the answer is ME. I WAS THAT DUMB. This is all stuff I have done.

"You know," Prompto began, in that sing-song, cajoling way that convinced Noctis to do stupid things, "this would all be a looot easier if you'd just go with me."

"Easier for you, maybe." Noctis stuck his foot between Prompto's face and his phone screen, resulting in a squawk of outrage and Prompto scrambling backward to sit far enough away from Noctis that there could be no further interference.

"I'm on *your team!*" Prompto screeched. "Stop trying to make us lose!"

They weren't anywhere near defeat, but Prompto's character had taken a pretty bad hit in the chaos, which distracted him enough that he didn't continue the conversation until they were out of battle. "I don't get what your deal is with school dances. Shouldn't be any worse than any of the state dinners you have to go to."

"Oh, it absolutely could. And it will." He laid back on the couch, tucking his feet underneath Prompto's leg. "I went to one dance in the eighth grade and it sucked because I don't actually know *how* to dance." Not to mention the fact that there were centuries of etiquette prescribed for state dinners and Ignis knew all of it like the back of his hand.

Prompto locked his phone and fixed Noctis with a look he couldn't quite parse. "Yes, you can."

"No, I know how to *dance* dance, but I don't know how to *dance at the winter formal* dance," he explained. He didn't mention that he was also pretty bad at the actual dancing and only survived by sticking to dark corners and praying that most women wouldn't find a teenage boy who was still holding out hope for another growth spurt to be a desirable dance partner.

Prompto hopped up from the couch, extending a hand to him. "I'll teach you! Seriously, lemme put some music on, it'll be fun."

Noctis remained resolutely where he was at. "That sounds terrible. And who qualified you to teach dance?"

"These *moves* did, buddy." Prompto did something... wiggly, and Noctis frowned at him.

"That doesn't seem like dancing."

Prompto scrambled for his phone, connecting it to Noctis's living room speakers and blasting a pop song he *knew* Noctis didn't like, that asshole. He continued to do what he claimed was dancing, and Noctis folded his arms to give Prompto less to grab. "Seriously, dude, it's not hard," he said. "C'mere. I'll be the girl, even."

Noctis didn't budge. "Isn't the point of me coming to the dance with you that you don't have to invite a girl?"

"Well, yeah," Prompto spluttered, missing a step, "but that doesn't mean we won't meet any hot single ladies while we're there!"

"Last time I checked, there weren't any hot single girls in our school, and that's the entire reason you don't have a date." Noctis allowed a smirk to creep onto his face. "Or is that just because they all turned you down?"

Prompto stopped dancing and flopped down onto the couch, sprawling over Noct in his best impression of a tortured soul straight out of a classical painting. "Noooooct," he whined, "you can't call me out like that, my heart can't take it."

"Your heart's fine," Noctis grunted, shoving at him.

"Forever alooooone," Prompto whined, still clinging.

"Nah. You have me," Noctis said. "I mean, I won't be your date to a dance, but the dance is stupid. We should just go to the arcade instead."

Prompto peered up at him, grinning, his chin digging into Noct's ribs. "You know, that actually sounds kind of fun. The only thing better than going to a dance is blowing it off because you're hanging with royalty."

"Yeah, right." Noctis laughed, soft enough that he could barely be heard over Prompto's music. "You'd be hanging out with me if there wasn't a dance, too."

The door swung open, and both of them perked up as Ignis wandered in, taking his shoes off in the entryway. Noctis could only see Ignis out of the corner of his eye, but he knew he was frowning.

"What is this?" Ignis asked, gesturing at the speakers, "it's absolutely *horrid*."

"Hey!" Prompto snapped, scrambling up and almost falling over in the process. "That's my favorite song!"

"That explains some things," Ignis sighed. "Your taste remains ever questionable, Prompto. It's likely why you're friends with Noct."

"*Hey!*"

— — —

"I mean, it's Prompto," Gladio said, when Ignis caught him outside the training rooms and mentioned his concerns about Noctis and his best friend. "He's kinda a touchy-feely guy, you know? He's always hanging off Noct."

"That's precisely my concern." Ignis tugged a cloth out of his pocket to clean his glasses.

"Iggy. The kid hugged *me* the other day. Half the people around here are scared I'll snap them in half if they get close enough."

Ignis scoffed, replacing his glasses and nudging them into place. "Come, now. That's ridiculous. I've only seen you do that once."

Gladio elbowed him in the side with a playful sort of admonishment, but Ignis didn't flinch. "What'd Noct say when you brought it up?"

"I haven't." As though there was a casual way to say *Noctis, why exactly was your best friend lying atop you on the couch, and do we need to have a chat about it, because there's no way the Lucian school system's sexual education program covers... that.*

"Probably for the best," Gladio said, clapping him on the shoulder. "Just keep an eye on him. What am I saying, you do that anyway."

"I'm a professional," Ignis agreed, bidding him goodbye, the smile Gladio normally put on his face fading faster than usual as worry crept back in.

This wasn't the first time he'd suspected there was something between Noctis and Prompto. Noctis had never been close with any of his classmates, but since he'd first introduced Prompto to Ignis, there had been something different. Noctis lit up around Prompto, allowed himself to smile unguarded and open-hearted. Ignis wouldn't want anything to dampen that, especially not Noctis's position, but nascent romantic attachments to one's best friend were much harder to nurture when one was the Prince of Lucian.

A long time ago, back when his suspicions about the nature of Noctis's closest friendship had developed, Ignis had decided that he would do whatever was in his power to allow Noctis the ability to have an ordinary relationship despite it all.

And now that he'd all but caught them together, he was even more resolute.

— — —

"I swear, I *almost* had a date," Prompto said, during a break in their late-night movie marathon to refill on popcorn and soda. "She like, almost said yes. It would have been out of pity, mostly, but if we hadn't got cut off by her friend—" he sighed, slumping back against the pile of pillows they'd stacked up against Noct's sectional so that they could lie on the floor. The coffee table was shoved to the side, their mostly-finished homework resting atop it. "Who am I kidding. I'm never gonna get a girlfriend. I'm doomed."

Noctis shrugged. "You don't need a girlfriend," he said, "we can just live here together and watch movies until we're old and crazy."

"Yeah, but dude. No dates? No kisses? No—" Prompto didn't get to finish his sentence. Noctis shoved a pillow in his face, because he was ninety percent sure the next word out of Prompto's mouth was going to be *sex*.

Thankfully, the apartment was dark except for the TV, which washed everything in blue and hid the red tinge to Noctis's cheeks. "You don't even know how to kiss," he said.

"Ain't that the truth," Prompto said, sagging back, clutching the pillow Noctis had chucked at him. "Noct, I hate to say it, but we're hopeless. If either of us actually manage to get a date, we're not gonna have a damn clue what to do."

Noctis shrugged. "Isn't everyone's first kiss like that, though?"

"Yeah, but we don't want the *girls* to know we've never kissed anybody," Prompto said, propping himself up on his elbows, leaning in with the kind of look on his face he got when he'd come up with a new strategy in whatever video game they were playing. "I mean, come on, you don't wanna be bad at it when you finally get a girlfriend, right?"

"Sure. Like that'll ever happen." He'd known for some time now that it wouldn't, unless he was dragged into an arranged marriage for reasons of state.

Prompto whined, tipping his head back. "Dude, you're the *prince*, if there's no hope for you then I'm screwed."

"You know," Noctis said, rolling onto his side to face Prompto, and voicing what he was sure would be an absolutely horrible idea, "we could practice. Like, on each other."

"Isn't that—"

"It's not gay!" Noctis shook his head, his hair falling in his eyes. "It's so that we can get girls to kiss us, how would that be gay?"

It was definitely a little gay.

"You know," Prompto said, looking at the TV screen and not in Noctis's eyes, "you've kind of got a point, there."

"Yeah, I mean, it's not like I wanna hold hands with you or anything."

Prompto did have nice hands, though. They weren't always dry, like Noctis's were. He always wore those wristbands, too, and a part of Noctis was curious as to what they'd feel like.

"Right, not like I'd wanna see you naked," Prompto agreed.

Noctis clenched his hands into fists, because his palms were beginning to sweat. He was flushed hot, probably because it was so fucking embarrassing to think about Prompto seeing him naked. And vice versa. So weird. He'd hate it. He didn't want to know how many freckles Prompto had under his clothes.

He leaned in closer to Prompto, picking up their drinks and setting them aside so they wouldn't be spilled all over the carpet in the shuffle. "Alright, man, you better not try and bite me."

"Duh," Prompto said. He scrambled to sit up and faced Noctis. "And no tongue. That'd be weird."

"Yeah. Super weird." Noctis leaned in, settling a hand on Prompto's shoulder. That was safe, right? Not like he was touching the guy's chest.

Although, if he was with a girl, he probably wouldn't just be touching her shoulder. He relocated his hand to the side of Prompto's neck and it earned him a shocked little gasp, as though Prompto was surprised by skin-on-skin contact despite the whole concept of this interaction.

"Are you ready?" Noctis asked, which wasn't super romantic.

Prompto nodded. His eyes reflected the blue of the television screen. "Should we like... tilt our heads to the side?"

"Yeah, probably. I'll go left, you go right?"

"Sure," Prompto said, and his eyes shuttered closed.

Noctis closed his own, angled his head, and leaned in until they collided. Painfully. Unsexily.

"Fuck!" Noctis leaned back, grabbing his nose, which had just smashed against Prompto's. "I forgot, your right is my left."

Prompto laughed so hard he fell over, scattering some of the pillows under him. "We're so, so bad at this," he said, nearly in tears. "This is even worse than the time we tried to bake cookies."

He was wrong, of course. Nothing could have been worse than their forays into baking.

"Shut up," Noctis said, grabbing Prompto's shoulder and pinning him against the cushions, leaning over him. "Just stay still, okay, I'm gonna—" and he leaned in demonstratively, pressing his lips to Prompto's for just a second before Prompto's mouth opened in a gasp, and Noctis could feel Prompto's breath.

"Oh. I didn't realize—that was better, keep going," he urged, shutting his eyes again. Noctis had never considered the fact that Prompto's eyelashes were blonde like his hair. He propped himself up on his elbows so that he could lie more comfortably, his left hand wrapped around Prompto's bicep

while his right brushed Prompto's hair out of his face. Not that it'd been in the way to begin with.

The first few kisses were overly gentle, a little too quick, but they made his heart race. Prompto put a hand on the back of Noctis's head to guide him into putting more pressure into it, kissing him longer.

"Let me sit up," Prompto said after he pulled away, "I need some more leverage, here."

Noctis sat back against the couch, letting Prompto readjust, which resulted in Prompto climbing into his lap, knees on either side of his hips. He didn't let his full weight rest on Noctis, but he did prod at Noctis's jaw until he tilted his head up so that Prompto could kiss him again. And again. Somehow, it was even better with Prompto in the lead, and Noctis couldn't help the soft groan that was wrung out of him.

They were still a little clumsy, not quite perfect, but the way Prompto clutched at his shoulders had Noctis shivering under him, grabbing at Prompto's hips to anchor himself. There was an electric pop in the background as the TV shut itself off after going unused long enough, and Prompto leaned back just a little. His tongue brushed against Noctis's mouth when he licked his lips, and when Noctis opened his eyes to find Prompto looking back at him, there was a particularly painful squeeze in his chest.

"I, uh, I take it back," Prompto said, "we're pretty alright at this."

"Good enough to get yourself a girlfriend?" Noctis asked.

"What? Oh, oh yeah. Hell yeah, definitely." Prompto grinned, scooting off Noctis's lap to sit next to him. "Oh, right, movies."

Noctis watched Prompto hum to himself as he started the movie back up, all of him gripped with the bone-deep realization that he did *not* want Prompto to get a girlfriend.

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Ignis and Gladio had gotten into the habit of lending each other books a long while ago, when the two of them had realized their tastes lay in remarkably similar directions. Gladio liked romances much more than Ignis cared for them, and Ignis enjoyed political thrillers, while Gladio, "got plenty of that in real life, thanks," but there was enough crossover that they spent many of their conversations recommending books to each other left and right.

To Ignis's knowledge, though, nobody else was involved in this little book club, so it came as a bit of a surprise when Gladio was missing the book Ignis wanted to borrow, because he'd lent it to someone.

"Noct has it," he said over lunch, like Noctis was in the habit of casually borrowing novels from his friends.

"I wouldn't imagine it's to his tastes," Ignis said. He recalled Gladio claiming this one was mostly a romance, but had a compelling enough plot to keep Ignis interested.

"Maybe he's branching out." Gladio shrugged. "He just asked if I had any good love stories—not in those words, but, you know. Forgot I'd been planning on lending that one to you."

Ignis didn't have to actually say anything, because Gladio had gotten used to interpreting the meanings of his various disgruntled facial expressions.

"You think this is about that 'thing' with Prompto," he guessed correctly.

"What else would it be about?"

"I dunno, Iggy, the fact that he'll probably get married someday? Or maybe he's developed a thing for you, since you're so charming and all." Gladio tried to hide his grin by taking a sip of his drink, but wasn't quite successful. Ignis considered kicking him under the table, but he also considered Gladio's most likely reaction, and he would like to not be banned from this particular cafe for starting a wrestling match, so he refrained.

"Listen," Gladio said, setting his glass down with an authoritative clack, "I know you want what's best for Noct. We both do. But... you're not gonna try and get him to dump the kid, are you?"

Ignis responded with a seriously affronted scoff. "Of course not! Do you really think—" he readjusted his glasses, calming his bluster before continuing. "You've said it yourself, we want what is best for him. And in my opinion, that would be giving him a chance to... hm."

Ignis was rarely at a loss for words, but when he was, Gladio could usually be counted on to fill in, as now. "A chance to be himself?" he suggested. "And by that, I mean, you know, just completely gay."

"Now, we don't exactly know that," Ignis said, but he didn't disagree.

"We totally do, he's gayer than *you*."

"Patently false," Ignis argued. "That would be scientifically impossible."

Gladio put his foot on the cross-bar of Ignis's chair. "Alright, yeah, that's true."

— — —

Prompto (09:23 PM): *hey babe wat u doin up so late ;)*

Prompto had gotten into this weird habit of fake-flirting with him over text after they'd found that website devoted to posting embarrassing screenshots of men texting on dating sites.

It would've gotten old fast, if Prompto wasn't so damn cute about it.

Noctis (09:24 PM): *Homework.*

Prompto (09:24 PM): *what would u be doing if i was there???*

Noctis (09:25 PM): *Homework. But i'd be watching you annoy Iggy while i do it.*

Ignis was, Noctis suspected, there to make sure Noctis actually did his homework. He'd sworn up and down that he'd passed up that phase where he didn't get any work done in favor of playing video games all night, but Ignis didn't believe him. Probably for good reason. Also, Noct suspected, sometimes Ignis just wanted to hang out, but wasn't used to inviting himself to social visits.

Prompto (09:25 PM): *oh, iggy's there?*

Prompto had reverted to normal texting, which Noctis counted as a victory any day of the week.

Prompto (09:26 PM): *wait, uh i mean send nudes*

Dammit.

Noctis (09:26 PM): *Do people actually do that?*

Prompto (09:27 PM): *wat?*

Noctis (09:27 PM): *send nudes*

Prompto (09:27 PM): *i guess? i've never sent any tho*

Noctis (09:28 PM): *I wouldn't even be able to take any without looking so stupid.*

Prompto (09:28 PM): *naaaaah u always look good in all my pictures*

Noctis laughed quietly, and Ignis looked up from the kitchen counter, where he was testing out his latest round of Mystery Desserts, fixing Noctis with a quizzical stare.

"It's just Prompto," Noctis explained.

Ignis hummed and went back to his pastry, albeit with more frequent pauses to watch whatever Noct was doing.

Noctis (09:29 PM): *I think that's just because youre good at taking them*

Prompto (09:30 PM): *dude. i'm gonna come over to ur house w my camera and i'm gonna make u take off ur shirt so i can PROVE that you look GOOD ok.*

Noctis could feel his face going red, and he resolutely looked down at his phone so that he did not have to face the reality of Ignis still watching him out of the corner of his eye.

Noctis (09:31 PM): *prom no!!! I told you, Iggy is here, you can't ocme do that*

It seemed a little too frantic, both due to the amount of exclamation points and the typo, but Noctis really did not like the idea of Prompto bouncing in only to tell Ignis he was going to take naked (okay, half-naked, but still) pictures of Noct.

Prompto (09:31 PM): *o shit right.*

Prompto (09:31 PM): *tomorrow?*

If Noctis knew what was good for him, he'd tell Prompto that the best time to take sexy pictures of him was never, ever, just don't do that.

Noctis (09:32 PM): *yeah ok.*

Noctis did not know what was good for him.

That was how he ended up lying on his bed in his boxers, with Prompto sitting astride his waist and pointing a camera down at him. All things considered, Noctis was almost glad about the camera, because it was the only thing making him uncomfortable enough to mitigate the hard-on that apparently came with Prompto straddling him.

Then the shutter went off, and Noctis stopped appreciating the camera altogether.

"Put your arms like this," Prompto said, dropping the camera to let it hang from the neck-strap as he demonstrated. Noctis attempted to mirror his pose, hoping this would bring them to the end of this little session sooner

rather than later. "Not quite—here, let me," Prompto said, before leaning over and taking Noct's wrists, maneuvering him into Prompto's desired pose.

Noctis was lying sprawled-out on the bedsheets, the blankets and pillows flung off to the side. He was sure he looked exceedingly dumb, lying there like a dead fish, and whatever angle Prompto was snapping photos from wasn't going to help.

Prompto seemed to think it was going well, though, if his encouraging little notes of, "that's good, hold that pose," and, "oh my *god*, these are going to come out fantastic," were anything to go by. He brushed his fingertips under Noctis's chin, tilting his face up just a little bit, and the way his eyes looked, observing Noct with the concentration of an artist, was almost too much. Noctis swallowed and shifted just a little, which made Prompto light up. His toothy grin was so cute, Noctis almost didn't mind the fact that he'd been dragged into a sensual photoshoot.

"That's perfect!" he cheered, and then, "Noct, buddy, look at the camera, not at me."

"Oh. Right."

— — —

Ignis found Noctis with his nose buried in his phone, which wasn't unusual. The fact that he didn't look up when Ignis called his name was a little more out of the ordinary.

"Whatever could be so distracting?" he asked, circling around so that he could sneak a glance and Noctis's phone screen.

"Oh, nothing, Prompto took some pictures of me the other day, and they came out way better than—"

"Are you *naked* in that?" Ignis asked. The photo was only from the waist-up, but it certainly resembled a boudoir shot, with Noctis lying back in his

charcoal-colored silk sheets, low lighting illuminating the planes of muscle in his arms and chest.

"No!" Noctis immediately squawked, shoving his phone in his pocket before Ignis got so much as a second glance. "I had underwear on, alright?"

Ignis was unsure whether that made a difference. "Noct. Regardless, you do realize this looks rather... sexual, don't you?"

Noctis, in a feat of human ability Ignis hadn't known was possible, went even redder. "It's not. It isn't a sex thing. It isn't a gay thing. It's—he's gonna be a *professional photographer*, Specs, he just asked me to model for him. You know?"

He did not, but he nodded slowly anyway.

He convinced Prompto to send him the picture. All it took was, *I should review to ensure that this is something we don't have to worry about the press finding—not that you would ever do that, but it's protocol.*

To be quite honest, he did want the photos for another reason. He wanted them to prove a point.

"Okay, shit, yeah," Gladio said, when Ignis pulled up the most particularly damning of the photos, handed it over, and waited. They were tucked away in a corridor between meetings, and Ignis leaned against the wall, his arms crossed over his chest, while Gladio continued to swear with increasing creativity. "He looks like he wants to fuck the camera," he added, "and that's not something I'd expect from Noct."

"He looks like he wants to fuck *Prompto*," Ignis corrected him. "Except that this is, apparently, 'not a gay thing' for the two of them."

"Like hell." Gladio handed the phone back to him.

"Indeed. That is the least heterosexual thing I have ever seen in all my existence," Ignis said, and Gladio snorted a laugh. Alright, perhaps a bit of an exaggeration. He tucked his phone back in his pocket, determined to

delete the photos later. The fewer copies in existence, the better. "But it seems Noct doesn't quite realize." He frowned, certain there was something to be done but clueless as to what it actually was.

"Hey," Gladio said, his hand coming to rest on Ignis's waist, just a little improper for what was essentially their workplace, "they'll figure it out."

"I suppose you did," he agreed.

— — —

"Oh, geez, is that really the time?" Prompto asked, glancing at his phone like if he squinted hard enough, it wouldn't say it was two-thirty in the morning. Also known as way-past-the-last-bus-o'clock.

"I could drive you home," Noctis said, setting down his game controller. It was a Friday, not like he had to get up and do anything important tomorrow morning. "Or, you know... you could stay here."

It wouldn't be the first time Prompto spent the night, but the previous occasions hadn't actually involved much sleeping, as they'd been all-nighters to finish school projects. It usually involved a lot of energy drinks, quizzing each other, and wishing for death. Sometimes, one of them would fall asleep, but the other would prod him awake and they would keep going.

That is to say, they never ended up in Noct's bed.

"Really? Yeah, that'd be awesome," Prompto said. He stretched, the worn-out T-shirt he'd had on under his school uniform riding up with the motion. "Got any extra blankets? Your couch is comfy enough, but you keep the AC on too high at night."

Noctis shook his head, even though he could probably procure some. "We can share the bed, it's fine," he said. "Plenty big enough for both of us."

"Yeah, that's cool with me!" Prompto said, and he took the left side, and there was no more awkward discussion.

It would have been fine, if Prompto wasn't such a cuddler.

Noctis had gone to sleep with Prompto curled up on the other side of the bed, but he woke up both because the sun was coming in through the gap in his curtains and because Prompto had relocated to *right on top of him*.

Prompto was sort of bony, and his knee was jabbing into Noctis's thigh, one of his arms thrown over Noctis's waist with his head resting on Noctis's chest. His mouth was half-open, his eyelids fluttering as he dreamed, still dead asleep. Lying there, with his hair ruffled so it looked even more like the back end of a chocobo than usual, wearing his old T-shirt and a pair of Noct's sweatpants, he was probably the most gorgeous person Noctis had ever seen.

This close, Noctis could practically count every freckle on his cheeks, his forehead, his nose. There were even a couple speckled over his lower lip. Noct was struck by the memory of kissing him, then struck harder by the desire to kiss him again.

As if sensing the uptick in Noctis's heartbeat, Prompto shifted, his eyes blinking open as he woke, lifting his head and summarily destroying Noctis's ability to think about anything other than how much he wanted to wake to this sight every morning of his life.

"Noct...?" Prompto said, shaking his head like he was trying to remember how he'd gotten here.

"Mornin'."

"Oh. Oh! Shit, I'm sorry," Prompto said, rolling off him, and Noctis sighed, wishing for once in his life that he'd woken up earlier. "What time is it?" He hopped up and checked his phone, answering his own question. "Oh, wow, it's like noon, I better go."

"Wait, Prompto, you don't have to—"

"No, it's fine!" Prompto said, throwing his bag over his shoulder. "I'll see you Monday?"

"Sure?" Noctis hadn't even made it out of the bed before the door closed behind Prompto, a shouted goodbye following.

Prompto could tell. That had to be it, he'd woken up and seen Noctis staring at him, and he'd gotten freaked out, because of *course* you'd get freaked out if you found out your best friend had a crush on you, especially if that best friend was a *guy*, and Noct couldn't help but curl into himself. He rested his head against his knees and sighed, trying his best to figure out how to unfuck this whole situation and failing to come up with an answer.

Noct followed his usual course of action for solving impossible problems.

He called Ignis.

— — —

It all came out over a far-too-late cup of morning coffee at Noct's apartment.

Ignis had been entirely correct about Noct's feelings for Prompto, which meant he had to shove down a wave of smugness that he'd direct at Gladio later. Noctis had even admitted to kissing his friend once, but the context of that kiss had been so convoluted, Ignis found himself beyond seeing it as romantic.

"I just... I don't know how to tell him," Noctis admitted, nudging his mostly-empty mug out of the way before burying his head in his arms on the kitchen counter. "I shouldn't, right? I should forget about it. But I feel like I'm lying to him."

Ignis hummed, taking the mug and rinsing it before depositing it in the dishwasher. "I can't tell you how it will turn out either way," he said, "but I can tell you that these things tend to become much easier when they've been said aloud."

Noctis looked at him as though Ignis had asked him to take down a behemoth with his bare hands.

"Just consider it," Ignis said, "that's all I ask."

"Sure, whatever. But with how hard he's been trying to get a date for the winter formal, I doubt it'll go over well." Noctis crumpled into a pile on the kitchen counter again.

"That does complicate things," Ignis agreed, although 'date' did not mean 'girl' and could very well mean 'Noct,' but it was impossible to be certain. "Noct. He's been your closest friend for the better part of three years now. Romance aside, he cares for you deeply. And I do not think he would begrudge you your feelings, whether or not he returns them."

Noctis made a sound like a dying animal.

"Capital. I'll leave you to it."

— — —

"So, I've decided," Prompto said, apropos of nothing, as they made their usual walk home from school. "I'm not going to the dance unless you're going."

Noctis groaned. "Prompto, quit it with the ultimatums. I'm not going."

"Then I'll just hang with you!" Prompto decided. They'd passed the cross street that would send Prompto back to his apartment a block and a half ago. Apparently he was following Noctis home.

"I don't wanna ruin your fun just because I hate school dances. Go, meet girls, whatever."

Prompto trotted a couple steps ahead of him and turned around, walking backward so he could look Noctis in the eye. "Dude. You don't get it. I don't *want* to go without you. Everything's more fun with you, and I mean, even though you probably wouldn't wanna be my *date* date, I've just kinda realized I'd rather be wherever you are—"

"Wait, what do you mean I wouldn't wanna be your date?"

Prompto almost tripped, and Noctis grabbed his arm to steady him, stopping in the middle of the sidewalk. "I mean, you've told me like three times in the past week that you're not gay."

"That's—I—Prompto, I thought you'd think it was weird if I told you I was," he said, an unpleasant sensation of *wow, I really fucked this up hard, didn't I?* settling in his stomach.

"What?" Prompto cocked his head to the side. "So you're..."

So gay. The gayest. Super worried about doing the king thing 24/7 because he'd known he was gay since he was fifteen and Gladio stripping his shirt off at every opportunity became An Issue. "Yeah. Sorry, I shouldn't have kissed you like that, I shouldn't have, ugh, *lied* to you like that."

"Yeah, you sure as hell shouldn't have!" Prompto nearly shouted, turning and continuing down the road. "Come *on*, Noct," he said, "we're going back to your place so I can kiss you for real this time!"

Noctis, who was going through some serious emotional whiplash, hesitated for another second before tearing off down the sidewalk after Prompto, because yes, that needed to happen immediately.

— — —

"So, how long have you..." Noctis asked, laying back on his couch with Prompto atop him.

"Had a huge stupid crush on you?" Prompto clarified, "I dunno, I think I figured it out sometime freshman year."

"What the *fuck*." Noctis pulled him in and kissed him again for a long moment. "Can't believe we should've been doing this for literal years."

— — —

Noctis still staunchly refused to attend a school dance, but unlike Prompto, he wasn't quite sure hanging out at his place or the arcade was a fair

substitution. Especially now that Prompto was his *boyfriend*, and Noctis hadn't taken him on a real date yet. So they went out.

Even after dark, the parks in Insomnia were busy, strings of lights hung overhead to illuminate the pathways for people walking. The evening, however, provided enough cover that no random bystanders would recognize Noctis.

"You're sure you'd rather be out here with me?" Noctis asked, a well of anxiety still springing up within him even though Prompto had very fully expressed his affections.

"Oh, hell yeah," Prompto said, throwing an arm over Noctis's shoulders, before thinking better of it and sliding it down to wrap around his waist. "Noct, c'mon. If I was at the dance right now, I'd probably just be texting you, anyway. It's much better to be out here, with my *super cute boyfriend*, I might add."

Noctis laughed and elbowed Prompto in the ribs, although he was pretty sure you weren't supposed to do that to your boyfriend.

Prompto really did seem to be in his element here. He'd brought his camera, and he was taking pictures of everything: the lights, the fountains, the two of them. Noctis had always liked the particular swell of warmth within him whenever Prompto pulled him close and took a selfie of the both of them. This time, though, Prompto kissed him for the second one, flipping the camera back around to show Noct the image he'd captured: Noctis's look of surprise as Prompto's lips pressed into his cheek, Prompto's head tilted attractively so that the line of his throat stood out against Noct's black jacket.

"It's a good one," Noctis said, "save that one for me?"

"You don't think Iggy'll try to fight me about it?" Prompto asked.

Noctis frowned. "No. Why would he do that?"

Prompto flicked back through a couple of the other shots he'd taken. "Well. I mean, he asked me about the ones I took of you *in bed*." That last bit was said with more innuendo than Noctis thought the occasion deserved. They *weren't naked pictures*.

Noctis huffed, blowing his hair out of his face. "Specs is overprotective. He's like, my weird mom who's only two years older than me and also a dude."

"So, he's nothing like your mom." Prompto laughed, loud and exuberant, and rocked back with enough force that Noctis worried he was going to topple backward into the fountain they were sitting on the edge of. He laid his hand on Prompto's back just in case; while it would normally be kind of funny to see Prompto fall into a fountain, he'd be crushed if anything happened to his camera.

And, again, Noctis didn't think you were supposed to be entertained by your boyfriend falling into a fountain.

Prompto leaned against his side, his head fitting perfectly into the crook of Noctis's shoulder. Noctis was suddenly thrilled by the idea that he could turn his face just a few degrees and kiss Prompto's wild hair—so he did. And then Prompto looked up at him, smiling nearly too wide to kiss him.

Noctis had assumed that kissing Prompto would feel the same as it had the first time, but he was so, so wrong. Because this time, Prompto was his *boyfriend*, and he was free to linger in every kiss, to rest his hand on Prompto's cheek, to tuck one of his feet between Prompto's ankles.

It went on longer this time, too, neither of them leaning away to bluster about future girls that would never exist. Prompto let his camera rest on his lap, one of his hands tucking into Noct's jacket and resting against his waist, his other clutching at the back of Noctis's neck, as though Noctis would disappear if they didn't stop kissing.

Naturally, neither of them were overly talented, so as soon as tongues were involved, things got a little too sloppy, and they parted giggling and wiping their mouths. "That was..." Prompto began.

"Yeah," Noct said. He couldn't help but kiss Prompto one more time.

Prompto couldn't help but kiss Noctis one more time, either.

Author's Note:

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